

# Inside City Hall

## Partnering for Trail Development



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# Getting from idea to project

- City Hall is a building full of **people**
- People **interact** in a variety of ways
- Your project may need the approval of a variety of people who all work in **different ways**.
- You are the **representative** of your project and your attitude and approach can go a long way in getting the project to reality

# Who at City Hall can help?

- Council and Planning Commission
  - General support and budgeting
- Police & Fire – want to know where to go
  - Help plan for a safe and secure trail system.
- Utilities – sewer, water, gas,
- Legal – easements
- Public Works, engineering
- Neighborhood/Community Planning
  - Comp Plan, surveying, zoning, proffers, mapping

# Who at City could hurt?

- Council – have to balance all desires
  - Property rights, budgets, other departments
- Police – Often wary of trails
- Fire – Access in emergencies a concern
- Utilities – right of way work, past promises
- Legal – Liability can be an issue
- Public Works – Utility corridors
- Planning – past decisions or enforcements

# Life of a Salesman

- You are selling your project to others
- Why should they buy it?
- Why now?
- What sort of deal can you offer?
- What product guarantee can you provide?
- Would you buy it if you were them?

•Ex: Sewer line at River Court – maintenance over long term

# Sugar than Vinegar

- You only get one first impression
- Ask nicely – everyone is a human
- Let the other person tell you how its done
- Assume you don't know better/more
- Others don't necessarily “owe you”

•Ex: Meridian Sidewalk project

# Sweet Talking

- How can I help you help me?
  - When asking for a favor, its always good to offer help. Even if it doesn't work out, you come out ahead.
- Would it help if I helped pay for it?
  - Use funding available to ensure your project is not put on hold for too long.
  - Use your funds to help with other projects where it may help get approval or permission

•Ex: Rivanna River Trail – drain, land swap, floodplain parking

# Sweet Listening

- Only ask for what you need to know
- Listen for the answer, thoughts & comments
  - If you call people together to get their input then talk the whole meeting, you won't get what you came for and neither will your audience.
  - When others begin the idea, they are more likely to want to finish it.

•Ex: Kneedler Property

# Time is of the essence

- Respect people's time. Take as little as possible and ask direct questions. The person you may be asking a favor of may have little time to help. The less time spent making the request, the more time left to fulfill it.
- If you don't have to meet in person or in a group, it's often faster to email/call.
- Keep meetings focused – complete the task at hand so those who don't want to linger can go.

•Ex: Public Works – 250 Bypass trail

# Keep your friends close

- The more departments and people aware of your project, the better chance they will think of it in context of other projects.
- Be aware of what others are doing that might affect your project. If there is an agency with a poor reputation working in your area, work to improve that relationship with neighbors.
- You are one “government” to the public

•Ex: Meadowcreek Interceptor – Bland Court

# Know your audience

- Some people are best with email
- Some people need to have a casual lunch
- Some people work best with the phone
  
- If one method does not work, try another.
  
- At group meetings, focus questions on the area of interest or authority of your group.

•Ex: Potter Easement

# Know Your History

- Trail projects often share space with parks, roads, utilities, waterways, and neighborhoods.
- Knowing how each came to be and what issues may be attached to each will allow you to make the case for trails in context.

•Ex: Meadowcreek Interceptor

# Take the steps you agree on

- Something is better than nothing:
  - A golden bridge is really nice
  - a steel bridge is great
  - a wooden bridge works
  - a missing bridge is useless.
- You can always improve over time

Ex: Clark crosswalk and Schenk's Greenway



# Celebrate Success

- Share positive feedback with everyone who helped – its often rare at City Hall
- Make new trails a newsworthy event to instill pride across the community.
- Build support for the next project

•Ex: Johnson School Trails

